

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Akash Ganga Trust is a non-profit, voluntary, service organisation and was formed in January 2002 by a group of like-minded persons from Chennai and abroad to promote, popularise and propagate rainwater harvesting in the country. It has established the Rain Centre, a one-stop information and assistance centre on Rainwater Harvesting, in Chennai city, the first of its kind in the country.

The Trust has also been involved in reviving the traditional water harvesting systems, particularly in South India. This book is being published as part of that activity.

The book is priced at Rs.100.

Copies are available at:

AKASH GANGA TRUST

D-15, Bay View Apartments, Kalakshetra Colony
Besant Nagar, Chennai – 600 090. Tamil Nadu.
Tel : 044-24918415. Email : sekar1479@yahoo.co.in

THE *ERY* SYSTEMS OF SOUTH INDIA

Traditional Water Harvesting

T.M. MUKUNDAN

Water has become a scarce resource, both in urban and rural India. Therefore, rainwater harvesting has become an urgent necessity both in urban and rural areas. While urban harvesting is done mostly as subsoil storage, rural harvesting is through surface storage bodies. The most important of these surface storage bodies are the traditional systems of surface water storage reservoirs, called *erys* (or tanks) described in this book. They have played a very important role in providing water for all the needs of our rural society in regions with relatively low rainfall. These systems which have served our society for centuries if not millennia and which are functional even today are in a neglected state.

This book attempts to bring out the greatness and the current relevance of the *ery* systems of South India. The topics dealt with in this book are – the technology of *erys*, how *ery* systems work and their role in the eco-system; the history of *ery* systems and the scientific knowledge which has gone into their design and construction; management of *erys* in the pre-British South Indian society; decay of *ery* systems under British rule; community management of *erys* today and the response of rural communities to the attempts by the State to “modernize” *ery* systems.

Erys have always existed for the benefit of the people. History shows us that it is the innovation and genius of our people that has given us these systems and the social and political organization responsible for maintaining them. These extraordinary indigenous systems can once again play their crucial role in the welfare of our people only if we once again find ways to give full scope to the innovation and creativity of our people.